

1980

History of the prison library at the Iowa women's reformatory

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to present a history of the Women's State Reformatory Library at Rockwell City, Iowa. The writer investigated the history of the library between the years 1940 and 1980, but the emphasis has been focused on the relatively recent history of the library because very few records were identified prior to the 1970's. Primary and secondary resources were obtained through 1) personal interviews with past and present employees, and administrative personnel associated with the library, 2) past records at the Reformatory and at the Iowa State Library, 3) periodicals newspapers, and annual reports from the Board of Control, and 4) records at the Iowa State Library and interviews with the institutional library consultant. The conclusions of this study are: 1) the Reformatory falls short of the Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions Draft II, but, during the past five years the library has improved and is working to meet these standards; 2) the inmate librarian has the responsibility for executing the goals set forth by the administration of the Reformatory; and 3) the inmate librarian and her assistant are doing a very good job maintaining the library, but a professional librarian is needed to maintain consistency and uniformity within the library.

HISTORY OF THE PRISON LIBRARY
AT THE IOWA WOMEN'S REFORMATORY

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	iv
 Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
PROBLEM	1
QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED	2
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY	3
LIMITATIONS TO STUDY.	4
ASSUMPTIONS	4
DEFINITION OF TERMS	5
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	6
3. METHODOLOGY	21
4. HISTORY OF THE IOWA WOMEN'S REFORMATORY LIBRARY	23
DEVELOPMENT OF THE REFORMATORY.	23
STAFF AND CLIENTELE	26
INSTITUTIONAL LIBRARY HIERARCHY	28
LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT, 1940-1980.	31
IMPACT OF STATE LIBRARY	34
FUTURE PLANS.	41
FINANCIAL SUPPORT	41
LIBRARY SERVICES AND USAGE BY THE INMATES	46

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD	52
SELECTION POLICY	54
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.	57
SUMMARY.	57
CONCLUSIONS.	59
APPENDIX	
A. CIRCULATION POLICY	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	63

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Institutional Library Hierarchy.	29
2. Duties of Library Director, Library Team, and Resident Librarians.	30
3. Statistics for Usage of Law Library.	50

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem

The Iowa Reformatory for Women is located in Rockwell City, Iowa. In the mid 1940's an institutional library was organized at the Reformatory and in the past years continuing progress has been made in the development of an adequate library. However, the present librarian indicated that no formal history had been written about the establishment of the library, and the only records are those presently kept at the Reformatory or in the files of the State Library.

The purpose of this study was to present a history of the Women's State Reformatory library at Rockwell City, Iowa. Emphasis was placed on the relatively recent history of the library because very few records were found prior to the 1970's, and the library as it now exists was developed in the past five years.

The twentieth century prison has stressed rehabilitation. This is the word that appeared most often in literature dealing with correctional institutions. The need for services to the prisoner was often emphasized.

While the methods, techniques, and programs differ in each institution the role of the institution is to utilize current knowledge and

techniques in education, psychology, medicine, sociology, occupational therapy, and vocational educational guidance in order to achieve its major purpose. It is within the context of achievement of the goal of rehabilitation that the role of library service in state institutions must be defined.¹

In most cases, the closest an inmate comes to any kind of rehabilitation has been the prison library. That is why many librarians have donated their time and efforts to improve services to prisoners. They are now trying to convince prison officials that libraries are important and a basic part of the rehabilitation process.

General questions to be answered about the library's development are:

1. Who began the organization of the prison library and why was it thought to be necessary?
2. When the library was organized in the mid-1940's what federal, state, and local financial aid was available and what aid is available now?
3. What selection guides were used to develop the initial collection, and what kinds of materials have since been added?
4. What methods have been used in the promotion and development of the library?
5. Who presently operates the library and what hours is it available?

¹Social, Educational Research and Development, Inc., Institutional Library Services: A Plan for the State of Illinois. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1968), p. 31.

6. How have service activities expanded as the library has grown?
7. Are there categories of materials with heavy or limited use?
8. Are inmates used in providing services? How?
9. What uses do inmates make of the collections and what influences do they have on collection development?
10. What influence does the Iowa State Library and its institutional consultant have on the Reformatory?
11. What role has the Iowa State Library played in helping the institution, and what is its continuing involvement?
12. What are future plans and activities for the library?

Importance of the Study

The library at the Women's Reformatory in Rockwell City, Iowa, was organized in 1940 under the leadership of a teacher/librarian. Since that time it has had many vicissitudes depending on who has been in charge.

With the writing of a complete history of the organization and continuing development of the library, a secondary source will be available for future reference. The people involved in the development are still living and available for consultation, so to a high degree this study represents the collection of oral history.

Ideas used in the development may be of use to other institutions, and a written history will be of interest to historical societies in the state of Iowa.

Limitations to the Study

Only this particular institution's library was studied. Hours spent in research were limited to the hours kept at the library at the Reformatory, and permission had to be received each time the writer entered the grounds.

The writer obtained much of her information by personally interviewing the program director, library director, state library consultant, and resident librarian. In addition time was spent at the State Library in Des Moines, Iowa, reviewing old records and files. Much of the history had never been recorded, and many records and statistics had not been maintained.

When the above mentioned people were interviewed, names of others who had worked with the Reformatory library in some capacity in the past emerged. These people were also contacted if their addresses were available.

Assumptions

In the promotion and development of the library at the Reformatory it was assumed that selection of materials was made for the community of people living there, namely the residents. It was operated similarly to a public library, but the contents within the library were intended to fill the needs of the inmates which were different from the reading needs of the people on the outside.

It was also assumed that an institutional library was necessary to meet the needs for the rehabilitation of the residents, although evidence to test this hypothesis

was beyond the limits of this study.

Definition of Terms

Women's Reformatory - Correctional facility for all women convicted of felonies within the state, as well as many who have been convicted of misdemeanors and received jail sentences.²

Prison - A building usually with cells, where convicted criminals are confined or accused persons are held awaiting trial.³

Jail - A building for the confinement of people who have broken the law or who are waiting trial, especially for those convicted of minor offenses.⁴

Resident or client - Inmate at the Reformatory.

Prison library - Libraries for adults in federal penitentiaries, state prisons, county or local jails.

²Iowa Official Register, 1973-74, p. 426.

³Webster's New World Dictionary. (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1962).

⁴Ibid.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

We have had prisons in America, as distinct from jails, since 1785 when Massachusetts established a state prison at Boston, and Philadelphia established the Cherry Hill institution in 1792 as a state penitentiary.¹

Prisons were initially intended to be places of misery and humiliation, and books had no part to play. When they were eventually provided, selection was made on the basis of demonstrating the extent of the prisoners' moral degeneracy; thus the reading material allowed was principally donated by religious organizations, and the accent was upon regret and repentance.²

While there is no evidence of an exact date, the Philadelphia Prison Society did provide books to the prisoners of the penitentiary of the Walnut Street Jail in 1790.³ These books consisted of volumes of prayers, sermons, and

¹Austin MacCormick, "A Brief History of Libraries in American Correctional Institutions," Proceedings of the American Correctional Association, Cincinnati, (Oct., 1970).

²David M. Gillespie, "A Citation-Entry Analysis of the Literature on Prison Libraries," AHIL Quarterly, VIII (Spring, 1968), p. 65-72.

³Jean Marie Zabel, "Prison Libraries," Special Libraries, LXVII (Jan., 1976), p. 2.

religious exhortations.

Another early library attempt was made at the Kentucky State Prison in 1802.⁴ It seems no real effort was made to establish prison libraries until the 1840's.

Orlando Lewis describes the situation as it existed in 1845:

Only the better organized prisons maintained libraries; Connecticut has a small library; each prisoner was furnished with a weekly temperance paper and a religious paper. Massachusetts had a library of several hundred volumes, initiated by a donation of \$50, sent by a mother of a life prisoner to her son, to furnish him with a proper reading. The prisoners in a Massachusetts prison made frequent donations to the library out of their earnings. The state appropriated in the 1840's \$100 annually to increase the number and greater variety of books. Books were distributed at intervals of several weeks in prisons possessing libraries at the discretion of the warden and the chaplain.⁵

1852 marks the opening of San Quentin library in California. It is important in the history of prison libraries because it was one of the best and most liberal prison libraries of its time, and this reputation remains today.⁶

Besides the dim view of rehabilitation for prisoners there was also the handicap of dimly lighted prison cells. Few cells into the nineteenth or early twentieth century had more than twenty-five watt bulbs. Books were usually printed

⁴Ibid.

⁵Rudolf Engelharts, Books in Stir, (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1972), pp. 26-27.

⁶John Bartlow Martin, Break Down the Walls; American Prisons: Past, Present, and Future, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1954), p. 11.

in fine type and subjects were dull and dreary. A prisoner needed extraordinary eyesight and will-power to read under such conditions.

There were very few collections of books deserving to be called prison libraries until the 1870's, and very few more during the rest of the century. In 1870 there were only thirty-four prisons in the United States and no reformatories for men or women. Of the thirty-four prisons, twelve were opened before 1830, fourteen between 1830 and 1860, and eight between 1860 and 1870.⁷

A study of Minnesota institutions revealed early efforts to establish libraries. In 1853, two years after Stillwater Prison was established as a Territorial Prison, an Act for its governance provided that the visitors' fee be applied to the purchase of books for the prison.⁸ This state contributed more to early institution library progress than any other state.

The earliest stirrings over the provision of libraries for Iowa's institutions began even before the turn of the century. In its early history one of Iowa's institutions can boast of a rather famous benefactor. The first books presented to the Mental Health Institute at Mount Pleasant were "fifty hymnals" given by Dorthea Dix when she and Julia Ward Howe were here to approve the building site in the late 1850's.⁹

⁷Austin MacCormick, op cit.

⁸Ibid.

⁹"Two Libraries at the M H Institute," The Mount Pleasant News, (April 17, 1964).

In 1898 the Iowa Board of Control was created by an act of the legislature to supervise the care of the state's institutions.

Alice S. Tyler, Secretary of the Iowa Library Commission which was created in 1900, recommended the appointment of a trained supervising librarian to visit all the institutions, help with book selection, train assistants, prepare systems of loans and acquisitions, and help with classification.¹⁰

Her efforts were seemingly influential as the Fifth Biennial Report of the Board of Control states: "On the 10th day of January, A.D. 1906, Miss Miriam E. Carey was appointed Librarian of State Institutions under our control at a salary of \$100 per month and traveling expenses."¹¹

A good summary of the situation of the institutional libraries prior to Miss Carey's appointment is given by the chairman of the Board of Control, who also explains how the new post was created and financed.

Even as early as 1906 the purchase and use of books and periodicals by the fourteen state institutions under the Board of Control of State Institutions of Iowa had become a serious problem. At that time the institutions contained 8,000 inmates in charge of 1,400 officers and employees, and included four hospitals for the insane, one hospital for inebriates, an institution for feeble-minded children, a soldier's home, a soldiers' orphans' home, school for the deaf, college for

¹⁰Iowa. State Board of Control, Bulletin, VII (1905), p. 334-335.

¹¹Ibid.

the blind, two penitentiaries, and two industrial schools.

The penitentiaries, having liberal library funds, had acquired large collections of books, one of the hospitals for the insane had a considerable number of high-class publications in fine bindings, many of them imported, but adapted to the use of advanced students and scholars. Other institutions also had books, and appropriations but the board was not satisfied with the work done or results attained, and felt the need of trained helpers in selecting reading matter and causing it to be circulated and read.

The needs of the institutions varied according to their different classes of inmates and the differing needs of inmates of the same institutions. Few of the institutions had anyone in service who possessed adequate knowledge of literature and also of the peculiar needs of the population to be served. Most of the libraries contained worthless books and some which were objectionable. What time had been given to the libraries was an irregular, spasmodic character, but little cataloguing was done, few records were kept, books desired were not easily found, and many were lost.

Attempts had been made to improve the services, but there were no funds to employ trained librarians to give all their time to the work. Finally the board became satisfied that a new system should be adopted to secure the best obtainable results, and conferred with state librarians and others as to different plans. It finally adopted the system of employing a trained, experienced, and competent librarian to take charge. As there was no state fund available for the payment of the salary and expenses of such an officer, the board could not appoint, but it was arranged that each institution should assume its proper share of the cost of the service based on the time the librarian should give the library. Pursuant to this plan, a trained librarian was selected who entered on the performance of her duties March 1, 1906.¹²

¹²G.S. Robinson, "Institution Libraries in Iowa," The Modern Hospital, VI (February, 1916), p. 131.

Miriam Carey entered the field in Iowa but in 1909 was recruited by the Minnesota Public Library Commission to enter its service with the title of "Organizer," and institutions as her special field.

From her new post in Minnesota, Miss Carey comments on Iowa in 1911: "As an outcome of the Iowa movement other states seem to be looking more and more closely into their institution libraries."¹³

In 1911, the American Library Association had focused its attention on prison libraries when a Committee on Libraries in Federal Prisons, working with the American Prison Association, reported on its attempts to improve library services in Federal Penitentiaries and to persuade Congress to provide better financial support for these prisons. Miss Carey was active in this endeavor.¹⁴ In 1912, the ALA's Committee on Hospital and Institution Libraries, of which she was chairman, began the preparation of a list of books recommended for penal and charitable organizations. In 1915, the first edition of ALA's Manual for Institutional Libraries was published. Miss Carey participated in its preparation. During her career she was involved in practically every endeavor, local and nationwide, to improve institution libraries, especially those in penal and

¹³Iowa. Board of Control, Bulletin, XIII (1911), p. 80-84.

¹⁴Austin MacCormick, op. cit.

correctional institutions. At her retirement in 1927 and her death in 1937, she had made more institutional library history than any other person in her time and had inspired contemporaries and successors to continued progress.¹⁵

In the 1930's, encouraged by the strong advocacy of correctional officials such as Austin MacCormick in New York and Richard McGee in California, correctional library programs received a new status in the development and delivery of correctional services.¹⁶ For the first time there was a national on-the-spot survey of prisons and adult reformatories, their educational programs, and their libraries. The first resident trained librarians, and the funds for reorganizing and restocking libraries in the federal institutions became available, which in turn stimulated improvements in state institution libraries. Furthermore, the working relationship of the American Library Association and the American Prison Association which had already been established was immediately strengthened and more effectively utilized.¹⁷

It was during this era that the first nationwide survey of American prisons and reformatories for men and women was made by Paul W. Garrett, Executive Secretary of

¹⁵G.S. Robinson, op. cit.

¹⁶Barratt Wilkins, "The Correctional Facility Library: History and Standards," Library Trends, XXVI (Summer, 1977), p. 119-23.

¹⁷Ibid.

the National Society of Penal Information, and Austin MacCormick. These men went to all penal institutions which included: three federal penitentiaries, two reformatories, three Army and three Navy prisons, and ninety-nine state prisons and adult reformatories in the forty-eight states.¹⁸

The libraries in the 110 institutions were appraised informally on a comparative basis because widely accepted standards for institution libraries did not exist.

Generally speaking, most of the libraries revealed the following characteristics:

- 1) Number and Quality of Books: The number of books, even in small institutions ran into the thousands, but practically all of the book collections needed culling. When a trained librarian screened the San Quentin Prison library, for example, 20,000 volumes were scrapped. Not more than a half-dozen institutions had a regular appropriation of \$500 or more for library use. Several large institutions had not spent a penny for new books in years. Expenditures for current magazines, however, were comparatively high.
- 2) Book Circulation: Statistics on the number of books circulated were often unreliable. Circulation reports that were dependable, however, indicated that prisoners in institutions with fairly good libraries took out about twice as many books a month as free citizens do from public libraries. The circulation of one excellent institution

¹⁸Ibid.

library averaged six books per inmate per month.

3) Library Facilities: The building or rooms in which the libraries were housed varied from a few facilities in which a public library would have taken pride to a couple of cells piled high with dusty books. Frequently the library was nearly as inaccessible to the inmates as the arsenal. Only a few institutions permitted prisoners to go to the library, and very few had chairs and tables at which they could sit and read.

4) Lack of Trained Librarians: There was not a single librarian with library school training to be found in any of the 110 institutions surveyed. Chaplains were frequently in charge. Many libraries were in the charge of inmates.

5) Lack of Standard Methods: The use of standard methods of book selection, accession, classification, cataloging, stimulation and guidance of reader interest was limited except in those that had systematic and sustained help from outside librarians.¹⁹

MacCormick's report did include a series of recommendations for improving the quality of prison libraries in the United States. He stressed the value of publicity in stimulating the use of the library. There should be proper financial support and trained librarians should be employed. The report also contained criticisms of the censorship

¹⁹Ibid.

policies which operated in many institutions.²⁰

MacCormick's recommendations met the fate of similar proposals. Little attempt was made to implement the advice.

There were, however, important changes taking place in the role of the prison library in the United States correctional institutions. By 1940 prison libraries were becoming more closely identified with the educational provision being made for prisoners. For some institutions the budgets for the library and the educational programs were linked, which brought some benefits for the library.

A survey published in 1941 revealed that little progress had been made since the MacCormick investigations fourteen years earlier.²¹ The main findings of the 1941 survey were:

- 1) Only fifty percent of the prisons responding to the inquiry were making specific provisions in their budgets for a library. The amount allocated to individual prison libraries would vary considerably. One library was receiving three thousand dollars for the purchase of books for the 1500 inmates, another was spending fifty dollars per annum on its library which served one thousand inmates.
- 2) In general, the library services in federal prisons

²⁰Gerald Bramley, Outreach, (Hamden, Connecticut: Linnet Books, 1978), p. 24.

²¹S.H. Souter, "Results of a Prison Library Survey," American Prison Association Proceedings of the 71st Annual Conference, San Francisco, August 19th-22nd, 1941, New York, American Prison Association, p. 322-27.

reached a higher standard than those in the state penitentiaries.

3) There were few trained librarians employed in the prison libraries and only one full-time professional librarian was working in the state prisons. In fifty-five correctional institutions the director of education nominally acted as librarian, and in twenty-five other institutions the chaplain was acting librarian.

4) The poor quality of many prison libraries did not deter the inmates from making use of them. In some institutions the entire prison population was enrolled as members of the library; elsewhere it was not uncommon to find over half the inmates being regular users of the library.

5) A high proportion of the books were worn out with anything up to ninety percent fit only to be discarded.²²

A number of surveys conducted during the 1950's suggested that the standards recommended by the American Prison Association were rarely being reached. Edwin Freidman, in a study published in 1950, noted that, while the majority of state and federal prisons had a library, a high proportion of the books they contained consisted of donated material and frequently the prisoners had to organize their own library service. Other surveys published between 1950 and 1960

²²Ibid.

²³Edwin Freidman, "Survey Shows Poor Libraries in Most Penal Institutions," Library Journal, LXXV (July, 1950), p. 1148-49.

confirmed these observations.

Some progress was made during the years between the two world wars. In some states attempts were made to improve the quality of library provision. This was particularly apparent where the prison authorities had embarked upon extensive rehabilitation programs. In 1944 California embarked upon an ambitious program of penal reform which brought substantial improvements in the quality of the libraries in the state prisons. The library was seen both as a source of educational and vocational information and as a means of developing the prisoners' cultural and artistic interests. The quality of prison library provision in the immediate postwar years was considerably ahead of that being achieved in other states. Gradually the example provided by California and the stimulus given by the American Library Association and other associations began to have an impact upon the standards of prison library services.²⁴

The 1960's saw a quickening of activity following the establishment of the Association of Hospital and Institution Libraries. The AHIL/ALA conducted a survey of present prison library conditions, and this information may have contributed to the passage of the Library Services and Construction Act.²⁵

In the 1970's prisoners began to demand recognition and treatment as human beings, with access to the outside

²⁴Gerald Bramley, op. cit.

²⁵Ibid.

world, information, and relevant reading materials. At the same time many librarians and their professional organizations began to advocate the social responsibility of libraries and librarians. The era brought a new vision: the library as an instrument of positive social change.²⁶

Library service to people in prisons is almost always implemented within the political context of the criminal justice system and frequently may itself have political implications. Nevertheless, the social and political issues of library service to people in prisons cannot be separated from larger library issues: the right to read, the access to information, the defense of free speech from censorship, the primacy of community priorities and needs. Prison illiteracy is a social issue. Illiteracy in America today, and access to reading materials, programs, and instruction for prison inmates, are social, as well as, library problems.²⁷

Overall, the trends in the courts in the 1970's have been encouraging to librarians working with prison population. In many jurisdictions great strides have been made in improving prison law library collections.²⁸ A landmark victory

²⁶Joan A. Stout and Gilda Turitz, "Outside....Looking In," Wilson Library Bulletin, LII (February, 1977), p. 499.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Marjorie LeDonne, "Summary of Court Decisions Relating to the Provisions of Library Services in Correctional Institutions," Bowker Annual Library and Book Trade Information, (New York: Bowker, 1974), p. 91-102.

was achieved when the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed a California ruling that an inmate's right to access to legal research materials is an extension of his/her right of access to the courts, and access to law library services is mandated where adequate legal counsel is not provided.²⁹

With the rights to access to the courts and counsel firmly established, questions soon arose about unrepresented or poorly educated defendants who could not draft appropriate petitions to submit to court and who did not have counsel to provide them with adequate legal assistance.³⁰

Cases soon followed that gave prisoners the right to keep a reasonable number of law books and other legal materials in their cells. It was thus an obvious next step to mandate that if the more affluent inmates could buy legal materials, then the indigent also had the right to legal materials - an inmates' law library.³¹

Other courts have concluded that this line of cases now requires that the prison officials either furnish inmates with an adequate law library or with adequate professional or paraprofessional legal assistance. Given the high cost of providing such professional services to inmates, it would now

²⁹Joan A. Stout and Gilda Turitz, op. cit. p. 502.

³⁰Howard Eisenberg, "The Long Arm of the Library," Wilson Library Bulletin, LII (February, 1977), p. 514.

³¹Ibid. Johnson v. Avery, 393 U.S. 483, 89 S. Ct. 747, 21 L. Ed. 2nd 718 (1969).

appear that the law clearly requires prisons to provide some type of law library services to its inmates.³²

Until recently, prison libraries were set up mostly as a form of tokenism, but with the recent wave of penal reform that has begun to sweep across the nation and the emphasis that is being put on education, this is no longer the case. Colleges and universities are beginning to extend their academic programs into the prison community, and a good library with a strong reference section must be an integral part of this rehabilitation.

Though there is still much to be done, prisons have come a long way in America and no longer can one walk through a penitentiary or reform school and find an abundance of "illiterate, sleazy-eyed slick-talking cons."³³ Prisons are beginning to turn out men and women capable of communicating with lawyers, legislators, and college professors on their own levels. While much of this newly acquired knowledge comes from the university and college programs, a great deal of it must be attributed to the prison library and its ever growing importance to the prison community.

³³Frank Andrews, "Prison Libraries: How Do They Fit In?" Special Libraries, LVIV (July, 1963), p. 270-73.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

To compile a history of the Iowa Women's Reformatory library at Rockwell City, Iowa, founded in 1940, the researcher used primary and secondary sources for the report. There were personal interviews with Kay Rhoads, program director and acting superintendent at the Reformatory, Carol Magoon, library director, Kitty Young, head resident librarian, Kathy Tyler and Aminah Sallis, assistant resident librarians, Pastor Darrell Garrietts, member of the library advisory board, and Darien Fisher, employed as state consultant for institutional libraries by the Iowa State Library. Mrs. Walter Ebert, a past employee of the library at the institution was also located and interviewed.

The researcher gathered information from records kept at the Reformatory and records kept at the State Library. Personal visits were also made to the State Library in Des Moines, Iowa, to do additional research at the library. A letter of inquiry was written to the Iowa Historical Society for any additional information.

The information gathered was developed into an historical narrative which included such categories as:

A) Development of the Reformatory which narrated the history

behind the origin of the Reformatory and gave some detailed information about the clientele, staff and security; B) Financial support, 1940-1980, which narrated the financial operation of the library; C) Library development, 1940-1980, which included such categories as physical facility, furnishings and equipment, jurisdiction, library staff (employed persons, volunteers, and inmate participates), and collection development; D) Library services and use by inmates, 1940-1980, which included such categories as policy on access, materials heavily used, consultation and guidance.

Chapter 4

HISTORY OF THE IOWA WOMEN'S REFORMATORY LIBRARY

Development of the Reformatory

The Women's Reformatory is an institution which seems to have been in the minds of women of the state of Iowa for a number of years before it materialized.

The earliest record was in the 1870's, when Lovina B. Benedict, a Friend's minister, secured the support of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.). She founded a voluntary reformatory, now known as Benedict Home and named in her honor, for women who were willing to place themselves under its influence. For the large number of women who did not care to reform and who were a menace to society she desired a compulsory reformatory, and in 1881 action was begun which culminated in the present institution established at Rockwell City.¹

In 1900 the Twenty-Eighth General Assembly established the "Iowa Industrial Reformatory for Females," at Anamosa, to occupy the building then known as the "Female Department of the Penitentiary." This was to be under the supervision of the Iowa Board of Control.²

¹Lena Beach, "The Women's Reformatory," Bulletin of Iowa Institutions, XXV (January, 1923), p. 51.

²Ibid.

The women of the state continued to work for an institution which would be separate from a male institution. From year to year more people became interested in the subject and by an act of the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly, 1914, money was appropriated for the purchase of land. A number of counties of the state offered farm land, but eventually Rockwell City was chosen. In November of 1915 one hundred and thirty acres of land were purchased two miles east of the city. In February, 1916, eighty acres of adjoining land was added to the tract.³ Construction began that same year.

World War I was in progress at the time the institution was nearing completion. During the month of May, 1918, twenty-two women were transferred from the Anamosa institution by train.⁴

The stated aims of the institution were: "1) To lead the girls to see life from a higher moral standpoint, 2) to give them a vocation with which they can make an honest living, 3) to make them take an interest in reading, and 4) make them take an interest in music, and 5) to restore them to good physical condition."⁵

At one time the women farmed the land, cared for the livestock, and processed food products. Farm buildings were

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 55.

⁵Ibid.

added as they were needed. The farm consisted of a dairy and horse barn, two silos, hog barn, granary, machine shed and chicken house. The institution had a good accredited dairy herd, and pigs and chickens were raised. The farm land was used to produce corn, oats, fruits, and vegetables. These activities no longer continue, and the land surrounding the immediate campus has been rented to a neighboring farmer.

During this early developmental phase of the Reformatory Miss Julia C. Stockett was appointed to the position of State Institutional Librarian in 1923. She came to the position qualified for the work, being a graduate of the Wisconsin Library School and having served as librarian on the Mexican border during the war and in the army hospitals since that time.⁶ For prison libraries she recommended an adequate budget, a trained librarian, and direct access to the shelves and reading room by "honor prisoners."⁷ She stated: "Perhaps even more Utopian is the idea which has been advocated of a comfortable, well lighted reading room. In Iowa there are such rooms in the Women's Reformatory, the Training School for Boys, and the Training School for Girls, but the inmates are not allowed access, though, from time to time, there has been discussion about the matter."⁸

⁶Iowa Traveling Library. Iowa Library Quarterly, IX (October, 1923), p. 186.

⁷Iowa. State Board of Control, Bulletin, XXVII (1925) p. 52.

⁸Ibid.

Paul Garrett and Austin MacCormick gave a description of the correctional institution's library as it was in 1929. The handbook stated that the library was located in the industrial building. There were 1,500 books, mostly fiction, and the domestic science teacher was in charge of the library. No regular appropriation was made for new books.⁹

No information was uncovered about the Reformatory library during the 1930's. It may be because of the Depression that neither money nor personnel was supplied to keep the library program in operation.

Staff and Clientele

The Reformatory is a minimum-security unit with no wall, fence, or armed guards. There are nine buildings on the grounds which include three cottages, a shirt factory, an education building, an office building, powerhouse, and two homes, one for the superintendent and another divided into apartments for the staff.

Women who are eighteen or older, or married and under the age of eighteen, who receive a sentence of at least a year and a day are placed at the Women's Reformatory.¹⁰

The writing of bad checks and forgery are the most

⁹Paul Garrett and Austin MacCormick, Handbook of American Prisons and Reformatories, (New York: National Society of Penal Information, 1929), p. 343.

¹⁰Statement by Kaye Rhoads, acting superintendent, in a personal interview, Rockwell City, Iowa, June, 1980.

frequent crimes; the average sentence is five to ten years, but the average stay is about eighteen months. The average age of the clients is twenty-one.¹¹

The treatment staff consists of the cottage matrons, cottage directors, three full-time counselors, three part-time psychologists, and one cottage social worker. The cottage matron is much like a housemother. She is responsible for signing yard passes, screening phone calls, and being responsible for the whereabouts of the girls within her cottage. The cottage director guides the matrons. The cottage director is responsible for settling the girls into their cottages upon arrival at the Reformatory, sets up their furloughs, and plans their programs and work detail.

The Education Department of the Women's Reformatory offers Graduate Equivalency Degree (G.E.D.) classes, typing, and special interest classes. Some college courses are also offered on the Reformatory campus.

An inmate council system was started in 1954. One girl is elected from each cottage by her cottage group, and a representative at large is voted on for chairman of the Council. When requested, the Council meets with the Superintendent. The purpose of this Council is to create a better understanding between administration and the inmate body. General inmate problems and welfare are discussed as

¹¹Ibid.

well as management of some behavioral problems.

Ted Wallman, immediate past superintendent of the Reformatory stated that the purpose as an institution is to provide care and custody while creating avenues of personal development for each client. Hopefully, each client may develop in such ways as to upgrade skills in areas of education, vocation, and self-awareness for a more effective social adjustment.¹²

Residents of the Reformatory work at various jobs on campus while incarcerated. Presently their pay is thirty-seven cents per hour. Three inmates of the Reformatory are employed in the institutional library. Kitty Young is the head resident librarian, and Kathy Tyler and Aminah Sallis are assistant librarians. Kitty Young has been at the Reformatory for ten years. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism. Kathy Tyler has been a resident at the Reformatory for nine months and prior to her admittance she was a court clerk. Aminah Sallis has been incarcerated for life, but the Reformatory gave out no other information.

Institutional Library Hierarchy

The library consultant for the State Library has ultimate authority over the institutional library except

¹²Statement made by Ted Wallman, Superintendent, Rockwell City, Iowa, March, 1976.

¹³Statement by Marlene Bridwell, Education Director, in a personal interview, Rockwell City, Iowa, August, 1980.

in cases involving administrative procedure. The following figure shows the hierarchy under which correctional libraries function in Iowa.

Table 1

Hierarchy of Library Administration
in Iowa Institutional Libraries

Department of Social Services

Division of Correctional Institutions

Institutional Superintendent

Library Board

Library Director (or) Education Director

Library Team

The library hierarchy in a few respects functions as a check and balance system.¹⁴ The Department of Social Services and the Division of Correctional Institutions are at the state level. The superintendent presides over administrative business of the library. The library consultant works directly with the library board, made up of seven members associated with the campus population, the library director, who is a member of the staff, and the library team, which includes the resident librarians and the library director. The duties of the library director, library team and the resident librarians are found in Table 2.

¹⁴Tomorrow Center Library Policy, Iowa Women's Reformatory, Rockwell City, Iowa.

Table 2

Duties of Library Director, Library
Team, and Resident Librarians¹⁵

Library Director	Library Team	Resident Librarians
*giving personal attention to problems of patrons	*set up policy	*organize and develop the lib- rary
*supervising the librarians	*establish pro- grams	*answer questions
*keeping records and making reports	*prepare a budget for Board approval	*train librarians
*serving staff library needs	*meet regularly with the board	*orientation to the library
*preparing overdue notices	*promote library usage	*handling projects
*signing clearance papers		*circulation re- ports
*maintain institutional discipline within the library		*providing I-LITE services
*promote usage		*filing cards
		*maintain staff library
		*repairing books
		*work charge desk
		*janitorial duties
		*shelving materials
		*clerical and book processing duties
		*promote library usage

¹⁵Ibid.

Library Development, 1940-1980

The library at the Women's Reformatory was started in 1940 when Miss Jean Bonar was employed as librarian and teacher. She held this position until 1959.¹⁶

According to the Superintendent's report in 1940, the inmates had library periods during the school year in which they could read the current magazines, and also select the books they wished to read during the following week. During the summer months, however, one copy of each magazine was sent to each cottage so that the girls could read it there.¹⁷

This policy appears to have remained in effect for many years. The library was mentioned again in 1946 when the superintendent stated in her annual report that each girl had a library period at which time she could go to the library and look through the magazines and select books she wished to read until her next library period. A librarian had charge of the books and the library.¹⁸

Mrs. Walt Ebert became the librarian/teacher in 1959 and held this position until 1966. In a personal interview with Mrs. Ebert the writer learned that she taught business education, bookkeeping, and business law. She had a teaching

¹⁶The writer tried to locate the whereabouts of Miss Bonar but all efforts failed.

¹⁷Pauline Johnson, Twenty-Second Annual Report, Report of Board of Control of State Institutions, (1940), p. 172.

¹⁸Eileen Murtagh, Twenty-Second Annual Report, Board of Control, (1946), p. 162.

certificate in business,¹⁹

Wednesday was "library day" and the girls could check out as many books as they wanted and take them to their cottages. They had to be returned the following week. There were many magazines which the girls could either come to the library to read or take back to their cottages. According to Mrs. Ebert the library was operated much like a public library.²⁰

Mrs. Ebert was the librarian, but she had an inmate assist her in some of the tasks within the library. The inmate received ten cents per hour. One particular accomplishment of which she was very proud was the covering of all books with wall paper and clear plastic with printed titles and Dewey numbers on the spines of the books. Miss Bonar had classified all the books during her employment at the Reformatory. She had no idea how many books there were in the library, but she said it was a "beautiful library which was constantly being used by the girls, and it was very well stocked with books."²¹

By the end of Mrs. Ebert's stay she had classified and cataloged all of the books according to the Dewey Decimal Classification System. There was no law library or audiovisual material in the library. When Mrs. Ebert left the Reformatory

¹⁹Statement by Mrs. Walt Ebert, Teacher/Librarian at the Reformatory in 1959-66, in a personal interview at Rockwell City, Iowa, July 14, 1980.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

in 1966 a teacher was hired to teach high school GED classes, and the library was turned over to the residents.²²

The years 1966-1970 marked a severe decline in library development. In the next four years the library became a "den of inequity."²³ The residents in charge of the library allowed "special cliques" to enter the library where activities such as homosexual acts, drug marketing, and drinking took place. Books were found with the insides hollowed out and stuffed with packets of drugs. Thus the library was locked up, books boxed up or given away, and by 1970 there was no library.²⁴

Consequently, the record of the Reformatory library resumes in 1972 when Micki Denfield, assistant superintendent, "cleaned house."²⁵ In 1972 Micki Denfield and Don Eades, education director, obtained a federal grant in order to establish the library again. At this time the library was named "Tomorrow Center Library," This name reflected these two people's belief that tomorrow starts today, not when the prisoners are released.²⁶

The library during this period was strong in career information and self-improvement resources. Many titles in the general collection were devoted to ethnic and women's

²²Ibid.

²³Statement by Kitty Young, Head Resident Librarian, in a personal interview at the Reformatory, Rockwell City, Iowa, June, 1980.

²⁴Ibid. ²⁵Ibid. ²⁶Ibid.

materials.

Impact of State Library

Ila Jean Mills, State Library Consultant for Iowa, made several visits to the Reformatory during 1975. Until this time little interest in the institutional library was demonstrated by staff or administration. The following excerpts are observations Ila Jean Mills made following her visits to the library.

September 8, 1975

I had a tour of the institution and visited extensively with the assistant superintendent. The mood is informal and the inmate librarian enjoys her job. They had not spent any fiscal year 1975 money. They thought they had spent all they applied for. They will now spend what they have left. I also discussed the necessity of keeping records. They did not apply for 1976 money because they do not want to keep records or statistics we ask for. They say it is impossible.²⁷

November 12, 1975

I met the new education director, Jim Hullinger. He has plans for improving the library. I told him about the FY 1975 money and explained the order process and what the funds could be used for. Bob Ramsfell of Iowa Central Community College, explained the type of courses offered and there are several ways the library could help. Short courses are most popular and the nonfiction could be expanded to cover topics in the courses. I feel the library could come up to a standard over a period of time. (five years)²⁸

²⁷Ila Jean Mills, Activity Report, State Library Commission of Iowa, Rockwell City, Iowa, September 8, 1975.

²⁸Ibid. November 12, 1975.

December 15, 1975

The librarians are interested in their work and they did not have the problems I anticipated. Most of the books are donated. They are stamped and have a card in the pocket, and a simple card file is kept. The nonfiction section needs to be developed. I found them unaware of many of the services offered by the regional and State Library. The girls agreed to keep statistics and submit them to me on a monthly basis.²⁹

In January of 1976, Ila Jean Mills, Iowa State Library Consultant, submitted a needs assessment for the Women's Reformatory. Her assessment yielded the following information:

At the present time the library relies on donated books to supplement their purchasing. The Library Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, Draft II, calls for a collection of 12,000 titles. At the present time the Reformatory collection is 3,010. Through interlibrary loan the library has access to over 12,000 titles. The library should have subscriptions to 60-80 magazine titles. Currently they have subscriptions to thirty-five. Newspaper subscriptions should total twenty, now they are receiving one. In their filmstrip collection they should have three hundred titles and they have ten. The standards call for a tape and disc recording collection of three hundred, the present collection is ten. The personnel standards call for three people to staff the library. At the present time it is staffed by two inmates.

In discussing the library with the Director of Education the following recommendations have been considered. The goals and objectives are listed below in priority order.

1. Statistics. Statistics should be kept and turned into the State Library Commission on a monthly basis. The inventory report should be brought up-to-date and turned in as required.

2. Cassettes and Records. The entertainment value of cassettes and records is high and this

²⁹Ibid. December 15, 1975.

collection should be built up and will, I am sure, be as popular with the residents as it has proved to be in other institutions. Tape players and record players need to be purchased to facilitate the use of cassettes and records.

3. Filmstrips. A filmstrip collection in the culture and entertainment areas needs to be developed for inmates to use in independent study or for relaxation.

4. Nonfiction. The nonfiction collection needs to be built up. Most of the fiction titles are paperback and are donated and they do have a good collection; but the nonfiction has been neglected. An evaluation needs to be taken and the areas that are found to be lacking should be filled in by purchase.

At the present time the library is used by residents as a place of gathering. This can be continued and as it is brought up to standard the library can become a center of events for the residents and for the institution.³⁰

An inmate, Kitty Young, assumed responsibility for the library on a part-time basis. She states, "While thus employed my attention centered on watching, reading, and attending workshops."³¹ Kitty Young attended in-service workshops in cataloging offered by the Des Moines Area Community College. She also took a correspondence course in library science from the University of Minnesota. She has been allowed to attend substation meetings, seminars, and short courses offered within the area. She presently has the equivalent of a Master's Degree in Journalism.³²

³⁰Ila Jean Mills, Women's Reformatory Needs Assessment Report, January 16, 1976.

³¹Statement by Kitty Young, in a personal interview, Rockwell City, Iowa, June 4, 1980.

³²Ibid.

By the end of 1976 and the beginning of 1977 the activity reports sounded more encouraging.

November 22, 1976

Kitty has been doing a good job with the library and the library is well used by all women at the Reformatory. The collection is up to the 12,000 that are listed as standard by the American Correctional Association. Many of the books are paperbacks and seem to be well used. A large portion of the collection is in closets and not on shelves because of the lack of space. It is proposed that they spend part of their money this year to purchase new shelving which will replace the outdated shelving that is presently in use.³³

April 16, 1977

There is a lot of activity in this library. The shelving that was recently purchased has been put up and has really increased the affected use of space in the library. Kitty has a lot of enthusiasm for her job in getting the library organized and making it of use to the residents. She has taken continuing education courses in Library Science and is now establishing a shelflist and a vertical file which has been needed for some time. I suggested that the next step be writing a selection policy and a long range plan so that there is continuity when she leaves the institution and someone else takes over. The collection seems to be fairly well-rounded with a lot of non-fiction and fiction that is appropriate to the setting.³⁴

Kitty made the statement:

March, 1977, brought me to the top position where it became apparent that my enthusiasm exceeded my knowledge. My goals were to catalog, set up accession and shelf lists, increase circulation, and be able to satisfy all reading preference and levels. After eighteen months I knew that I'd bitten off a little more than I

³³Jean Mills, Activity Report, Rockwell City Reformatory, Rockwell City, Iowa, November 22, 1976.

³⁴Ibid. April 16, 1977.

could chew, but being stubborn kept me from admitting this. Help and information were solicited from outside as well as "inside" sources. More learning was necessary and it became crucial to add another worker.³⁵

Sara Wisdom, new Iowa State Library Consultant in 1977, made a visit to the Reformatory on August 22, 1978; and in her report she stated:

The library is run by Kitty Young, an inmate, who is an intelligent, capable, and energetic young woman. She is almost solely responsible for turning the library into a model facility. The administration has given her excellent support and allowed her to attend programs to help her with her work such as a four-week Cataloging for Small Libraries course. She has since weeded the entire collection and classified the remainder by Dewey.

Kitty has formed a library board which met the day of my visit. It is made up of three residents (who are library users but do not have the library as their work detail), three staff members and a representative of the community of Rockwell City. At this meeting Kitty Young presented the board with the library staff's selections (listed by broad Dewey category) for approval.

Personal recognition of Kitty Young for this outstanding job she has done is a recommendation. This seems to make more sense than recognizing the institution since it is primarily the result of her efforts and the institution shouldn't rest on her laurels after she is gone.³⁶

In the last three years, the library at the Women's Reformatory (IWR) has been transformed from a pile of books and magazines to a well organized, public school corrections

³⁵Kitty Young, "Tomorrow Center Library--Iowa Women's Reformatory," Prevail, II (November, 1979.)

³⁶Sara Wisdom, State Library Commission of Iowa Institution Library Visit Report, Rockwell City, August, 1978.

library.³⁷ Superintendent, Ted Wallman, credits Kitty Young for this development.

When Kitty's work started three years ago, the library could barely be called one. Housed in the library today are over 10,000 books, 35 magazines, a dozen newspapers, and audiovisual equipment. The library also contains a reference section and a law library. The women are adding the final touch by organizing the card catalog.³⁸

In 1979 another State Library Consultant was hired to replace Sara Wisdom. In her report in September of 1979 she writes:

The Tomorrow Center Library is carefully organized and cataloged, and an attractive library as well. It is decorated with posters, the space is well utilized, and areas are well labeled.

Kitty and Karen are doing a marvelous job with the library. The convenience and needs of the clientele are their foremost considerations. Some of the strengths of their collection include: women's study, children, poetry, and ancient history. They need how-to-books for learning other languages, and literature in foreign languages.

Kitty has several good ideas for receiving funds or donations, or assistance; the Jayceettes, the Regional Library System, charities. She sees a need for a "how-to" manual that could be used as a tool for bringing libraries up to standards.

The level of professionalism at Rockwell City is demonstrated by the fact that they aren't merely interested in borrowing books from other libraries, but they would also like to put out bibliographies to make other libraries aware of the collections, so that they can lend as well.³⁹

³⁷"Iowa Women's Reformatory Library Coming of Age," Inside Out, I (Sept./Oct., 1979), p. 5.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Darien Fisher, State Library Commission of Iowa Institutional Report, Rockwell City, September 12, 1979.

Kitty Young, inmate librarian, summarizes these accomplishments by stating:

In addition to my goals, we've done major weeding to a point where out of 8,000 titles, seventy-two percent are in recommended lists such as Standard Catalog for Public Libraries, Books for College Libraries, Books for Junior College Libraries, and Fiction Catalog...made heavy use of posters and techniques, provided support to all departments of the institution. With the exception of required space we have met the State Library Commission's Minimum Guidelines for Iowa Public Libraries...hosted an institutional meeting in the spring of 1978 at our facility. About eighty percent of the residents use our library (an increase of twenty percent from last year). Nine percent of this number are the "hard-core" readers who have caused the highest circulation monthly total to be 683 books in April, 1979 (average population is eighty residents)...our usual circulation totals are 350 books monthly.

Some people feel that in achieving all this we have made quick progress. Personally I view the situation as a battle that has not been without its casualties...much space has been sacrificed and some policy flexibility has lost out to institutional security. We have jealously guarded the right to read and patron privacy as far as library usage is concerned. Our loss/damage/theft rate is virtually non-existent because the women appreciate the efforts we've made as well as having contributed their own material, thoughts, money, and time to making us the best library available.

It has been said that the library is what it is because of me...to this I say "Oscar Meyer." While I may be steering the works, a captain is only as good as the crew and the ship itself. I've been blessed with a dedicated, enthusiastic crew...especially those here now, Jane, Kathy, and Karen; State and Regional systems people with an involved active consultant, Darien Fisher, make up the ship. The prison administrative support is the riggings and the patrons are the sails which cause the ship to move.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Kitty Young, "Tomorrow Center Library--Iowa Women's Reformatory," Prevail, (November, 1979), p. 5-6.

Future Plans

In visiting with Kitty Young, inmate librarian, the writer learned that her future plans for the library include: 1) expansion of space by being allowed to move to a larger area within the educational building; 2) increase the audio-visual department of the library; and 3) develop a language lab.⁴¹

Financial Support, 1940-1980

The earliest stirrings over the provision of libraries for Iowa's institutions began even before the turn of the century.

In 1898, the Iowa Board of Control was created by an act of the legislature to supervise the care of the state's institutions. The Board of Control's early interest in libraries was partly due to the fact that two of the three members of the board were also trustees of the State Library.

Shortly after his appointment, one of the board members wrote: "We seek to provide each institution with a good working library suited to the needs of its inmates. It is the policy for the Board to expend as far as the finances admit, any amount of money necessary or proper for the development of the libraries in all the state institutions."⁴²

⁴¹Statement by Kitty Young in a personal interview at the Iowa Women's Reformatory, Rockwell City, June, 1980.

⁴²Florence Rising Curtis, The Libraries of the American State and National Institutions for Defectives, Dependents, and Delinquents, XIII (Minneapolis, 1918), p. 31.

When the Board of Control and the superintendents of the institutions met for their quarterly conference in June, 1905, Mr. Johnson Brigham, the state librarian and president of the Iowa Library Commission read his detailed paper, "Libraries in the State Institutions." In Part I of this paper he discussed institutional libraries in other states. In Part II the attention was turned to institutional libraries in Iowa and Brigham quoted L.G. Kinne, a member of the Board of Control:

Until the act of the legislature two years ago there was no money provided for the purchase of books at any institution except as we obtained special appropriation therefor. These were usually small amounts.⁴³

The act of the legislature to which Kinne referred occurred in 1903 when the legislature passed a law stating the money received from visitors to the penitentiaries was to be set aside as the library or book fund of the institutions.⁴⁴

The writer failed to uncover records during her research which had been kept in regard to library funding and expenditures over the years. The accumulation of books from 1940 to 1975 ~~was~~ largely through donations from residents, staff, and interested organizational groups. Some audiovisual equipment had been purchased but no one seemed

⁴³Iowa, State Board of Control, Bulletin, VII (1905), p. 334-335.

⁴⁴Iowa, State Board of Control, Bulletin, IX (1907), p. 188-98.

to know when it was purchased or for what reason it was purchased, or who had purchased it.

In 1975 Micki Denfield, Assistant Superintendent, applied for and received a one-time grant for \$5,000 from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA). This money was used to establish the law library. She also applied for a Library Services and Construction Act grant (LSCA) which the State Library administers to institutional libraries.⁴⁵

LSCA is a state formula grant program with matching requirements operating with four titles: I, Library Services; II, Public Library Construction; III, Interlibrary Loan Cooperative; and IV, Older Readers Services. Since the extension in 1970, the emphases in Title I have been on 1) providing library services to disadvantaged persons in both rural and urban areas; 2) extending library services to the state's institutionalized residents and to the physically handicapped, including the blind; 3) strengthening metropolitan public libraries that serve as national or regional resource centers; and 4) improving and strengthening the capacity of the state library administrative agencies to meet the needs of all the people in a given state.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Statement by Micki Denfield, Assistant Superintendent, in a personal interview, Rockwell City, July, 1980.

⁴⁶Elizabeth H. Hughey, Federally Funded Programs and Grant-Making Agencies, p. 7.

By definition in the act, state institutional library services means "the providing of books and other library services"⁴⁷ to residents of institutions operated or substantially supported by the state. Eligible institutions run the gamut from correctional institutions (penitentiaries, prison farms, road camps, reformatories, vocational and rehabilitation facilities, and youth training centers and schools) to health and custodial facilities (mental health hospitals, sanatoriums, and old-age homes) to residential schools for the developmentally disabled and physically handicapped. This wide variance in the types of institutions served necessitates an equally large diversity of library services.

Title I funds are used to establish and upgrade institutional libraries, enabling them to demonstrate the benefits of good library service and make a more meaningful contribution to the overall rehabilitation program of the institution. Strengthening an institution library is partly accomplished through purchase of equipment and materials, contracts with local public libraries for services (for example, bookmobile visits), and provision of centralized ordering and processing. Additionally, institution libraries are upgraded through improved staffing, which includes both the hiring of qualified personnel and the development of existing staff through in-service training.⁴⁸

LSCA (federal) funds are disbursed through the State Library to the institutions, which meet the grant with matching funds from their institution budget which comes from money appropriated by the state to the Department of Social Services. The Reformatory at Rockwell City first received a LSCA grant in fiscal year 1977 for the amount of \$2,825. In 1978 the Reformatory received \$3,000, and in 1979 it received \$3,000. By 1980 the Reformatory was receiving the maximum allowed in the amount of \$3,400.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹State Library Commission of Iowa, "Iowa State Institution Library Statistics," January, 1980, p. 10.

The acquisition policy for materials, supplies, furniture and equipment purchased by the institutional librarians at Rockwell City with LSCA Title I funds administered by the Iowa State Library follows:

Funds may be applied to the acquisition of library materials for 1) recreational use by the residents, 2) the independent study needs of the residents, and 3) the general reference needs of the residents.

Funds may be used for the purchase of furniture, equipment, and other items necessary for the performance of all activities of a library relating to the collection and organization of library materials for the purposes specified above and for making the materials and information of a library available to the residents of the institution.

Funds may not be expended to purchase materials where the need for those materials is clearly caused by curriculum needs or where the need is basic to the central purpose of the institution. Therefore, textbooks and other educational materials which are used instead of or as supplements to textbooks, and any materials which may be purchased with LSCA Title I funds administered by the State Library. Likewise, materials for legal research may not be purchased with LSCA funds, as LEAA grants are used for such materials.

The grants awarded to Iowa State Institutional Libraries for fiscal year 1980 were determined on the basis of numerous factors. The eighteen institution libraries were judged competitively according to the following criteria (the order is significant): number of residents, number of titles per capita, circulation, percentage of grant spent in fiscal year 1979, and needs as indicated by the grants request document.

In the coming year, increased attention will be given to the manner in which the correctional institution libraries measure up to the standards specified in the Manual of Standards for Adult

Correctional Institutions.⁵⁰

At the Reformatory Library Advisory Board meeting in April of 1980 the expenditure of grant monies was discussed and it was decided to spend twenty percent on fiction, thirty-three percent on nonfiction, twenty percent on audio-visual materials, and the balance on library tools, supplies, and shelving.⁵¹

Library Services and Usage
by the Inmates

"Books are for usage" is the motto of the Women's Reformatory library in Rockwell City. That motto and the enthusiasm of the residents who staff the library impressed a group of officials from the State Library Commission during a July, 17, 1979 tour of the facility.⁵² Jane Gray, director of library development for the Commission said, "people energy is what makes the difference between this library being some place and any place. The resident librarians go to great lengths to help residents get information."⁵³

The library's collection currently houses over 10,000 volumes. Gray said the library's collection is comparable to public libraries which serve populations of 1,500 to

⁵⁰Statement by Darien Fisher, State Library Consultant, in a personal interview, Des Moines, Iowa, July, 1980.

⁵¹Minutes from Library Advisory Board meeting, April, 1980.

⁵²"Iowa's People," Iowa's People, III (Sept., 1979) p.3.

⁵³Ibid.

2,500, but the population at the Reformatory averages eighty persons.⁵⁴

The purpose of the Tomorrow Center Library in their policy states: "The library is the information and materials center; library programs are geared to ALL patrons. The whole objective is to support, broaden, and strengthen the educational and informational needs of the patrons by providing appropriate materials in an attractive setting."⁵⁵

The overall objectives are: 1) provide academic and vocational material; 2) enlarge social and reading backgrounds; 3) develop reading as a satisfying leisure-time activity, a release from strain, and/or a positive aid in providing new interests; 4) become a source for non-print media and encourage use of all media (print and non-print).⁵⁶

The resident librarians do see that ALL patrons are served by the library. If a resident is locked in the cottage she has access to the cottage library which is comprised of old paperbacks, encyclopedias, and magazines. There is a small library in each of the three cottages. Rarely is a client locked in solitary confinement, but if she is the library has provided off-site services for her.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Tomorrow Center Library Policy, Iowa Women's Reformatory, Rockwell City, Iowa.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Statement made by Kitty Young, resident librarian, in a personal interview at the Women's Reformatory at Rockwell City, June, 1980.

Other programs have been initiated by Kitty Young, inmate librarian, for the purpose of promoting the library. One such program was Black History Month. Little known historical events about Black History ran daily in the Reformatory bulletin. The first day of the program the following information was published to introduce the program:

The month of February has been nationally designated as BLACK HISTORY MONTH. In recognition of blacks whose achievements were over-looked or purposely omitted from history books, the Tomorrow Center Library will be featuring in the daily bulletin during the month of February, excerpts from books that deal with black history. For those who may be interested in learning more about black history, the Tomorrow Center Library will have books on display that can be checked out.⁵⁸

Each day following this bulletin a paragraph of information about BLACK HISTORY was published. It was a very successful program according to the librarian.⁵⁹

"Monday Night Madness" was another program for promotion of the library. On other occasions puppet plays and travelogues were presented to the residents.

The librarian found that by leaving the shelves a bit unkempt the residents were more likely to browse and skim through books. "If everything were too neat they were afraid they would mess things up, so they left the books

⁵⁸Statement made by Kitty Young, head resident librarian, in a personal interview, Rockwell City, Iowa, June, 1980.

⁵⁹Ibid.

alone."⁶⁰ Leaving returned books in piles on the desk also promoted usage. Patrons were anxious to read what other patrons had returned. "Word of mouth"⁶¹ is always a great way to promote books and the librarian thinks this is one of the best promotional methods at the Reformatory primarily because of the small clientele.

The law library was added in 1975. A one-time grant for \$5,000 was received from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. About fifteen books are added annually to update the collection.

Among the law library collection are Shepard's Citations for State, Regional, Federal and Supreme Courts, Federal Supplement-Federal Reporter 2nd Series, Northwestern Reporter, Iowa Digest, and Iowa Code Annotated.

The Tomorrow Center Library began recording usage tabulations for the legal collection in February, 1978, at the request of Superintendent Ted Wallman. In Table 3, Statistics for Usage of Law Library, are the basic statistics for this period which show the number of times the collection was used, over what period of time, the average usage per day, and other pertinent information. Kitty Young, resident librarian began recording this information for the Superintendent and continued it for approximately a year and one-half.

⁶⁰Daily Bulletin, Rockwell City Reformatory, January 31, 1978.

⁶¹Statement by Kitty Young, head resident librarian, in a personal interview, Rockwell City, June, 1980.

Table 3

Statistics for Usage of Law Library⁶²

<u>Month</u>	<u>Times Used</u>	<u>Unit Days</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Unanswered</u>
<u>1978</u>				
February	39	39	1.0	--
March	63	29	2.3	--
April	48	40	1.2	14
May	72	48	1.7	--
June	54	44	1.3	11
July	40	40	1.0	--
August	26	16	1.7	--
September	46	39	1.2	3
October	55	44	1.2	6
November	43	40	1.1	8
December	no information available this month			
<u>1979</u>				
January	67	44	1.5	11
February	32	40	1.2	9
March	82	42	1.9	23
April	65	40	1.7	29
May	68	43	1.3	11

In reply to a question posed by Mr. Keiser, who succeeded Mr. Wallman in 1978, while visiting the facility, Kitty Young, resident librarian, made the following statements based upon her observations over the past three years as a librarian of the Tomorrow Center Library, and, as the person who has chiefly dealt with the legal collection for this same period of time;

For us to cite *Younger v. Gilmore*, 404 U.S. 15 as a legal precedent for the retention of our collection would be insufficient to acquaint anyone

⁶²Based on personal correspondence between Mr. George Keiser, Acting Superintendent and Kitty Young, Resident Librarian, dated June 15, 1979.

with the scope and impact which removal of the collection would have on the institution; we are not referring to legal ramifications when we say this. If by chance you are not familiar with this major Supreme Court decision, it mandates that correctional agencies provide prisoners in state correctional institutions with adequate legal counsel or adequate access to legal reference materials.

In looking at the usage statistics breakdown, it is evident that the collection is frequently used--at least twice daily. For the ten months in 1978 for which usage information is available, we find that the collection was used 486 times over 359 days which averages out to 1.3 times per day; for the five months in 1979 the same computations work out to 316 times over 209 unit days for an average usage figure of 1.5 times per day. This represents a usage increase of forty percent and we project an increase total of fifty-seven percent to sixty-four percent over last year's figures by December of 1979.

Now that we have demonstrated that our usage averages are increasing as one reason for retaining the legal collection let us reiterate some of the usage background we touched upon when Mr. Keiser spoke to us. For the most part, it is the resident population which requires the legal collection availability although we do receive some questions from staff members. Virtually all staff requests are in the realm of general legal knowledge and as such can be answered without consultation of documentation from the reference materials. Questions of this type are not counted on our legal statistics, rather they are listed as part of our reference questions on our standard monthly report form. We have done this to give us an accurate picture of collection usage. Questions comprise approximately eighty percent of usage tables. Some of these questions require minimal input of time on our part while others may involve intense researches of one to three hours. On occasion we call the law library at Des Moines for answers, for xeroxed materials, or just for a starting reference point.

At this time it is important to say that we use our own discretion in requesting things from Des Moines library. This is due to the expense of the call and the burden it places upon them. The Des Moines law library is called as a last ditch effort or when specific information we do

not have is required. If any patron has involved situations which call for legal advice rather than documentation we direct them to statutes dealing with the particular point of law or action in question, and, suggest that they contact an attorney or legal agency for interpretation regarding their individual case. It is difficult to assist a patron when they require clarification of legal terms or points without seeming to practice law. We do "give" advice when it comes to filing complaints against the institution or in other actions because we recommend that the appropriate chain of command or course of action be followed regardless of circumstances.

A small number of our tools (less than twenty percent) are used in conjunction with classes which people are taking, either through correspondence studies or college courses offered on campus. Forty-three percent of the usage come from patrons dealing with their incarceration offense(s). An additional seven percent look into personal/societal concerns or proceedings. We can't account for twelve percent of the usage because these patrons were able to research without our assistance in any way; the remaining eighteen percent were involved with situations concerning IWR.

I believe people incarcerated at IWR have a sense of security because the law books are here. Logically speaking, human beings like to double check people, actions, and/or situations for themselves. That being the case, if the law collection were removed many people would feel that their lawyers, the courts, or the institution were getting the better of them. It is this security-evoking feeling which leads us back to a remark made earlier to the scope and impact removal of the collection would have on the institution.⁶³

Library Advisory Board

In February of 1978 the groundwork was laid for the organization of the Library Advisory Board of the Tomorrow Center Library. This was a new concept for institutional

⁶³Based on personal correspondence between Mr. George Keiser, Acting Superintendent and Kitty Young, Resident Librarian, dated June 15, 1979.

libraries, and the Reformatory was the first prison in Iowa to attempt such a move. Kitty Young, Resident Librarian, proposed the idea to Pastor Darrell Garrietts, Reformatory Chaplain, who in turn used his influence to assist her in organizing the board. The Library Advisory Board is made up of seven members associated with the campus population. These include three staff members, one outside member, and one resident from each cottage.

In an ~~interview~~ with Pastor Garrietts, the only remaining original member of the board, he pointed out that the formation of such a board was necessary at that time because the library had been "nothing but a roomful of discarded and boxed-up books" needing organization, which was an almost impossible task for one person, and in order to have a successful library it needed staff and resident input.⁶⁴

It is the duty of the board to approve all purchases or paid programming projects as well as to provide input on services and the needs/desires of the patrons, subject to final approval of the institutional superintendent.⁶⁵

Pastor Garrietts said the Board is structured so that there are more staff involved than residents, but staff is needed for stability, and no meeting is held without a resident present.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Statement made by Pastor Darrell Garrietts, Reformatory Chaplain, in a personal interview, Rockwell City, Iowa, July 8, 1980.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

Two roadblocks stood in the way in the beginning. The administration had to grant permission for inmates to handle funding of the library and more important, permission had to be granted for inmates to be in charge of inmates which would be the case in the library with the head librarian being an inmate.⁶⁷

Pastor Garrietts personally felt that Kitty Young, Resident Librarian, wanted the advisory board for reasons of feedback, their expertise, assistance in forming policy and guidelines, and clout when dealing with residents in the library.⁶⁸

One particular inner struggle the board is presently having is "how to meet the needs of the residents."⁶⁹ Abilities of the clients range from those with reading disabilities to those reading at college level. Some members of the board believe that funding should be spent on popular fiction to meet the needs of the residents, and others believe more funds should be spent on reference material to meet the needs of those taking classes. Pastor Garrietts thinks it will take some time to resolve this problem.⁷⁰

Selection Policy

A letter received February 4, 1980, by Kitty Young, Resident Librarian, from Darien Fisher, Special Services

⁶⁷Ibid. ⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid. ⁷⁰Ibid.

Librarian for the Iowa State Library reads in part:

The Tomorrow Center Library reflects skillful and imaginative management. The library ranks third among all the institutions for the number of titles per capita, circulation figures are fourth highest, a sign of a good selection policy. There are a lot of new titles and the grant for fiscal year 1979 was spent wisely.⁷¹

In regard to the above letter a brief statement about the selection policy was written by Kitty Young, Resident Librarian. The comments were:

We realize that because we wish the book selection to be liberal, there is the possibility that a book or books in the library may be regarded by some as unpleasant or offensive, or in political opposition to local beliefs. However, if the Tomorrow Center Library is to fulfill its obligation of providing books, then it must have in its collection material of varied points of view, even those points which may be regarded by some as controversial, whether because of political expression or affiliation, or moral implication.

The aim of the collection is to make available books and other materials that will meet educational, informational, cultural, and recreational interests and needs of the patrons.

Books are selected with the aim of helping patrons find self-realization, live useful well-adjusted lives in the community, and know and understand the world at large. They are selected to widen the patron's thinking, to enrich her life and to help her fill her recreational and emotional needs.

Selection of library materials may be limited by the following factors: 1) Need for additional

⁷¹Based on personal correspondence between Darien Fisher, Special Services Librarian, and Kitty Young, Resident Librarian at the Women's Reformatory, Rockwell City, Iowa, February 4, 1980.

material in the existing collection; 2) physical limitations of the building; 3) suitability of the format of the material for the library purposes; 4) budgetary considerations.⁷²

⁷²Brief statement by Kitty Young, Resident Librarian, on the selection policy of the Tomorrow Center Library, April 21, 1980.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to present a history of the library of the Iowa Women's Reformatory at Rockwell City, Iowa, during the years, 1940-1980.

Primary and secondary resources were obtained through 1) personal interviews with past and present employees, and administrative personnel associated with the library, 2) researching to find past records at the Reformatory, and at the Iowa State Library, 3) usage of periodicals, newspapers, and annual reports from the Board of Control, and 4) personal visit to Des Moines to research at the Iowa State Library and visit with the institutional library consultant.

The Reformatory has had a collection of books since the mid 1920's, and for two decades following World War II a teacher/librarian was employed. However, during this time span no records could be located by the writer which would give a detailed account of the library. It wasn't until the 1970's that any records could be obtained which went into detail about the development of the library as it is today and much of the development is credited to an inmate librarian, Kitty Young. Consequently, the emphasis of this

research paper lies with the development of the library in the past five years.

Conclusions

A historical research is not an easy task when one runs into so many brick walls. It is amazing to the writer to discover no organized, or well-kept materials relating to the development of the Iowa Women's Reformatory library at Rockwell City, Iowa.

After writing the review of the literature it was interesting to find that the Iowa Women's Reformatory fell into the listed shortcomings. The Reformatory fell short of the required number of books, and the books the Reformatory did have were badly in need of weeding. No circulation reports could be found, so no comparison could be made about book circulation at the Reformatory. Library facilities have not been good at the Reformatory. There has been lack of shelving and lack of space. There has generally been a lack of trained librarians operating the library. For a period from 1940-1966 the library was in charge of the campus teacher, who was not necessarily a trained librarian. Following that time period the library has been operated by inmate librarians.

The writer also came to the conclusion that although one purpose of the institution is to aid the client in developing her education for a more effective social adjustment, it is one of the responsibilities of the inmate librarian to contribute to this goal being carried out.

After 1966 the institution administration found it necessary to close the library because the inmates were misusing it. The institution is fortunate to have an educated and dynamic inmate in Kitty Young who has assumed such responsibility since 1976.

Inmates are definitely helpful in promoting the use of the library, but the writer recommends the Reformatory employ a professional librarian who will maintain consistency and uniformity within the library.

Recommendations

The study could be replicated by researching the library of another institution. Additional research might be done by using county, local, or state backfiles of newspapers and with more time to conduct such research.

The writer did her research with great assistance from the resident librarian. Another approach could have been taken by attacking the problem from the State Library Consultant's point of view, or from the point of view of the administration at the Reformatory.

Another approach for social science research would be to study the effects of reading on a sample population. The research could show the impact the library has on the inmates.

Hopefully the results of the study will point out to the administration that the Reformatory has a good institutional library, and they will be influenced by the report to maintain this library with professional librarians in the future.

Appendix A

Women's Reformatory Circulation Policy⁷³

We wish to achieve and maintain a "number one" status for institutional libraries...this can only be done by your support and advice as to what we can do to make our library the best for ourselves.

The need has come up to give the policy to each person on campus so they will know exactly where they stand. Although the guidelines are set down in a formal style, we don't wish anyone to think that all points are without some flexibility...therefore, each situation will be analyzed as it arises...and because we realize that accidents can happen, that things wear out naturally the only hard and fast rule we cannot and will not sway from is: All materials will be checked back into the library before any papers are signed. But also, it is a wise idea to notify us of any problems with the material as soon as it comes to your attention.

Staff

You must adhere to these guidelines also except that the necessary permission for reference materials shall come from the Superintendent or the Education Director...you have access to all AV equipment (at request) for use in conjunction with the institution but you must take a stand-by status to clients on popular tapes and cassettes and magazines.

If you have occasion to use the library at a time other than regular hours, it is your responsibility to leave things exactly as you found them and keep your group from using materials not needed for this period.

Library Policy

The new library policy is a combination of state requirements for operating a penal library and client needs

⁷³Women's Reformatory Circulation Policy, Rockwell City, Iowa.

and responsibilities regarding this facility. Anyone checking out materials or using this facility, or keeping materials already in their possession after receipt of this policy, gives their consent to fully comply with the current policy and guidelines set forth in the handbook, or any published changes in the policy after this time.

Restrictions...may be imposed for any length of time in those circumstances where such a measure is deemed warranted. Such circumstances include:

1. Purposeful or negligent damage/loss of materials (in extreme cases this may also be cause of a discipline, i.e. destruction of state property)
2. Materials kept beyond the return date and time; Restrictions may be on:

Tapes

You may not check out any printed material but may use the material in the library only. Limit of restrictions is determined by the Education Director based on the individual case.

Books

You may not check out any printed material but may use the material in the library only. Limit of restriction is determined by Education Director based on the individual case.

Materials

Can be regarded as a total restriction as it combines both of the above. Limit is set by the Education Director.

Having a restriction does not mean that you cannot use the library...it merely means that your use of the library is hindered because of consistent non-conformacy to library policy and disrespect for other clients who wish to use the materials.

In addition to a possible restriction the person who signs for the material, or otherwise accepts responsibility may be held liable for any materials that are grossly overdue or stolen or irreparably damaged through negligence.

Client may send a note counter-signed by their counselor, cottage director, or the Education Director for books or AV equipment if they demonstrate the need for this material but illness, schooling absence cottage restrictions, etc. make it impossible for them to come during library hours.

RATES SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE AVERAGE COST TO REPLACE MATERIAL IF IT IS NOT LISTED IN THE BELOW TABLE OF STANDARDS...

Paperbacks \$1.00 per volume
Hard cover \$8.00 per volume

Check Out

Books, UNLESS OTHERWISE STIPULATED may be checked out for one month without renewal. Any books not returned by the due date will be placed on a list and a copy will be sent to the cottages. Lost books will be billed through the business office.

Only five books may be out to a patron at one time. No legal reference material will be loaned out unless the patron is confined and can show extreme necessity for the materials. The book may then be checked out from 8:00 to 5:00 of the same day and only one book at a time.

If we do not have a book that you want, we will try to obtain it through interlibrary loan. To avail yourself of this service, tell us the author and title, or subject matter desired, and we will order it for you.

Magazines can be checked out on Friday and returned the following Monday. Tapes can be checked out after 1:00p.m. and must be returned by 11:00 of the following day. No more than four may be checked out at any one time.

You may check out one type of tape player at a time on any day after 1:00 p.m. and must be returned by 11:00 a.m. the Monday, Wednesday, or Friday after being checked out.

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